

MUSCHACHITO MIO.

BY JEAN INGELW.

I have a brother who is a midshipman. That announcement is easily made, and to sisters who are not in similar case it is of no particular significance, but to those who are it suggests a great deal. For midshipmen, like other boys, come home sometimes to cheer the hearts of their relatives; and how they spend their time when enjoying these visits is well known to the initiated, but the world in general can form but a meagre notion of it.

A midshipman, when he comes home, soon makes his family feel that no part of the house, inside or outside, is inaccessible to him; windows are handier things than doors to come in at, if one may judge of his habits; there is no tree in the topmost branch of which he will not sit cross-legged, cracking filberts; there is no rock's nest, however high, that he has not poked his fingers into; poplars are a joke to him, and he makes no more of oaks and chestnuts than he does of haystacks.

Other boys are contented to sit on chairs and eat their lunch in a dining-room, but a midshipman loves to eat up aloft, and carries his provisions, sometimes plate, glass, and all, to the top of the green-house, where, strange to say, he never breaks the glass; or to the top of the pigeon house, which is a very handy place, because of the weathercock, upon which he can hang his cap and jacket.

He comes in smelling of smoke, and presents you with some sooty young jackdaws, which he has just got out of the top of the chimney. He spends a sovereign in rope, such as boxes are corded with; it comes home from the shop in a cart; some of it he makes into rope ladders, and runs up and down them like a squirrel; other lengths are twisted into cats-cradles in the trees, or fastened from one to the other, and upon these he reports himself and travels audaciously from tree to tree without touching the deck. Oh that her Majesty could conveniently be served without so much agility and such marvellous powers of swimming!

Finally he goes away again upon his country's service, and his relatives have the comfort of knowing that, whatever he may have done at home, the feats that he is performing perhaps at that very moment in the rigging of H. M. S. the —, make his other feats nothing and not worth mentioning.

The best receipt I know of for keeping a midshipman on terra firma is to tell him a story. Under favorable circumstances I have known this to succeed for two or three hours together, if it is done in the open air and among newly-cut hay; the lines of hay, I suppose, remind them of waves; for certain it is I never knew a midshipman run off over these lines, and I have tried the experiment several times, and on more than one of these generally refractory subjects.

Sometimes my brother could be drawn into relating a story himself; some adventure that he had met with, or some wonderful thing that he had seen; for this said midshipman, though scarcely yet fourteen years of age, has visited every quarter of the globe, and known both shipwreck and tornado.

Once he told me such a curious story, showing the value of presence of mind. It was under forest, out of it in a twinkling, and I now offer it to you, divested of nearly all the language of the sea; its interest partly depends, in my mind, upon the fact that but for this singular presence of mind he probably would not have lived to tell it.

"I suppose you have heard of Cumano?" he began; ignorance on such subjects as terrestrial magnetism, navigation, and the internal arrangements of a ship seeming to his mind inconsistent with knowledge on any other points.

"How can you ask such a question?" I answered. "Yes, of course, I have, and I have read an account of it in Humboldt's 'Islands in the Northern part of South America.'"

"Oh, well, I thought you might not know about it; at least I thought you might not know about the experiments that have been made there; about the variations, and all that." He then added something about a volcanic country, and the "inclination," and the "dip," and I thought I would not commit myself, so I merely said that I had read Sir John Ross's book, and how he went in search of the magnetic poles.

"Oh, well," he answered, "then I needn't explain it to you. I did tell you that we lay off Cumano for some time, and that we were sent up the country to that convent on the mountain; Talbot and Owen and I were sent with the second and third lieutenants and the doctor, to the heights above Cumano, with the chronometers and the instruments."

"No, not long, only difficult; it took several days. You cannot think what an extraordinary shore there is in that part of South America. When the tide goes out it uncovers acres of trees; their stems and lower branches are thickly incrustated with slimy mud, and yet they live and grow in the salt water. They are mangroves, and have great flapping, fleshy leaves, almost as thick as a person's hand. You never saw such unwholesome-looking trees; they called upon the heat till the mud is dry and cracked upon them, and then the tide comes up and wets it again."

"We travelled up the country on mules; it was intensely hot, and so steep when once we began to ascend the mountain that I should no more have thought the mules could climb up with us than I should have expected them to get up to the masthead, and yet they did contrive it, and took up the instruments too. Where there were no trees for shelter the country was nothing but dead grass, dust, and rents cracked in the ground—some of these rents were three feet across, and had lizards hiding in them and crayfish—but under the shade of the forest everything never absolutely looked at it till we were within one pace of it, and then my eyes seemed drawn to it and fixed upon it. It was a serpent. The mule sprang back and snorted; her eyes looked as if they would start from her head."

"There she lay, the odious thing, sleek and fat, all coiled up and knotted, and her little eyes leering at me with a horrid sort of deceitful smile in them. It could not have been more than one moment that I sat gaping at her, but it seemed a year, and then the mule cried out almost like a human creature, and turned round and tore up past the other mules, straining and stumbling, and still uttering that fearful cry, till in two or three minutes we were up again in that level place; and I turned and saw all the other mules but one tearing up the ascent, and poor little Owen straining up on foot."

"There was dust in the road—first I saw only that—then in the twinkling of an eye I saw Owen's mule creeping up slowly, and my first thought was wonder where the serpent could be; and my next wonder at the tremendously long tail that this mule was trailing after her. In another instant this tail was reared up, and brandished over her back, and she was sprawling on the road; and the tail was that great serpent. Directly the ser-

pent and the mule were rolled up together into one mass, and rocking from side to side, and writhing and struggling. At last—the wretched mule kicking still—they both fell together over the edge of the precipice, and went plump into the top of a tree, and while we sat quaking and looking on, they crashed down from thence, and rolled among the ferns and canes, and were lost.

"It was a horrid sight, and when I got over my surprise a little, I found we had all dismounted, and that Owen was standing wringing his hands and crying with all his might; and then, after that, he stopped and burst out laughing till he made himself cry again. Of course we did not like those old monks to see an English boy crying, and we kept patting him on the back, talking to him. At last he seemed to wake up all on a sudden and began to look about him."

"Well, old fellow," Talbot said to him, "how are you now?" "Oh," he said, "I'm all right. What are we waiting for?" "But presently he remembered all about it. He was last, it seems, and as each mule came up to the serpent it shied and dashed up the ascent, but his mule actually put her foot into the middle of the creature, slid down among the steep folds, and at once seemed paralyzed, and never stirred, but kept gazing at the thing as it uncoiled itself and began to hiss softly."

"Owen said he did not remember how he got off, nor anything else, till he found us all shaking him, and telling him that he was quite safe; and he kept shivering and crying out, while he described the serpent's eyes, 'Oh, the hissing monster! I hate her—I do hate her!' And, do you know, it has seemed to me rather shocking ever since, that instead of feeling thankful that we were all safe, I could think of nothing but that text in the Bible about Haman!"

"What text, my dear boy?" I asked him. "Why that account of how Haman came home and told his wife about his riches and his honors, and the distinctions that the king had conferred upon him, and then ended by saying, 'But all this avails me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate.'"

"I cannot see any connection between the text and the serpent," I observed; "how came you to think of such a subject?" "It flashes into my mind directly, and I thought to myself, what is the good of having this world to live in, if such odious reptiles as this are to share it with us. How I did loathe that serpent; it quite curdled my blood even when I think of her!"

"I have often heard people speak of that peculiar hatred," I replied, "and refer it to the enmity that God placed between the serpent and the seed of the woman."

"Yes; so the chaplain told us afterwards. I have often heard lions and tigers roar, when I have been keeping the middle watch, and have felt a good deal of fear, and a sort of respect for them, but no disgust. It was grand in the dark to listen; it made one think, Oh, you jolly old fellow, I'm glad you're not crushing my bones! But when you have once heard a serpent hiss, and seen his sleek body and the hideous leer in his eyes, it does not seem enough to have escaped, only to have looked at him sometimes makes the spot I'll live for days afterwards with disgust and fear."

"But I was going to tell you what a brave thing Talbot did; as long as I live I shall always think it was the bravest thing that could be, and I shall respect him as much as any grown-up man, though he is only two years older than I am."

"I told you that we had all dismounted in that shady place; the mules were standing huddled together, but we were in no fear of the serpent, for we knew she would not quit her prey; so we all sat down, and the kind old monks broke off some branches, and we all began to eat ourselves up with them, while they got out some provisions. There was a sort of sauté, made of the flesh of iguanas—very nice these creatures are, I can tell you—and then there was some cake of Indian corn, and some baked parrots; but just as we put the very first mouthful into our mouths, Talbot started up, as if he was perfectly astonished, and said to us, 'Why, youngsters, we shall never be on board ship by sundown if we stop to rest here, and you know what our orders were; and in an instant he threw down his cassava and bread, and began to saddle one of the mules with all his might. We were extremely surprised; we did not know that the order had been at all urgent. The monks too were surprised; they arose with many bows, and as plainly as possible let him understand that it was their wish and intention to rest. But the more they said, the faster Talbot saddled. Their bows and politeness changed to anger, and still the words went on; they thought he could not understand, but they understood that he was perfectly bent upon setting off again forthwith; and boy as he was, they did not seem to know what to do to prevent it. We were rather sullen at being so disturbed; but Talbot's manner and determination so amazed us, that when he ordered Owen to get up and mount, the poor little fellow obeyed instantly. Talbot struck the mule with a whip, and off she set down the spine. 'Now then,' he said to me, 'up with you, Talbot, your mule's ready.' He was trembling with hurry and impatience. 'No, I said, 'it suits me to wait a little longer. I shall never forget his face then, it seemed to express so many things—terror, entreaty, and determination. 'I've no time to wait,' he said, 'but if you don't mount this instant, I— I must strike you.' He was far stronger than I, but as he lifted up the whip I knocked up the handle, and it fell. Instantly he turned to the Indians, they obeyed him, and set off without a word, then the astonished monks, casting melancholy eyes on the provisions, were somehow made to mount. I don't know how he did it; but I suppose they were so amazed at his behavior and his audacity, that they had no sense left to contend; and Talbot gave each mule such a blow at parting, that she set off at full speed."

"And then he turned to me. 'Now, then,' he said, 'there is but this one mule left for both of us; mount and be quick.' I felt that he had no right to command, and I was angry and astonished. I fixed my eyes on him for a moment; his whole face seemed to be changed by his impatience, and worked and quivered with it. I heard the pattering hoofs of the other mules; they were still audible. If I could have known! 'No,' I said to him, 'I will not go till I have an explanation.'"

"Very well, then," he answered, "there it is." He had already got his hand on a stone to urge my mounting; he now turned his eyes towards the most shady and secluded end of the bower, and there—oh, it makes me cold to think of it!—there, on a rock, folded and reposing, lay another serpent, just like the one we had seen before. It was watching us, and bathing its long, slender tongue in a narrow stream. Instead of springing up and setting off for my life, I could not stir, nor breathe, nor get my eyes away from the fearful creature; but Talbot dragged me up by main force, and mounted behind me; and off we set slowly—oh, how slowly!

"We had no whip to urge on the mule with, for I had dropped it when I snatched it from Talbot, and I shall never forget the terrors of the next five minutes. At last the mule caught sight of her companions and mended her pace, and in a few minutes we came to an open sward, where only a few trees were scattered here and there.

"When we had found a really safe place where the rock sheltered us, and where there were no crevices in which any creature could hide itself, we all lay down, and Talbot made an apology to the monks; and I contrived to explain to them what he had done. They were exceedingly delighted with his presence of mind, and kept repeating, *Muschachito mio, Muschachito mio.*"

"Talbot told us that he saw the serpent the moment the provisions were served up, and was so frightened at first that for an instant he thought of springing on a mule, dashing down the slope again, and then turning round when he was safe to warn us of our danger. As he really did something so different, I think it was very honorable of him to confess this first intention."

"Yes, indeed," I replied; "and I think he showed wonderful presence of mind and a noble courage." "I was sure you would say so. He said that he then considered the confusion and fright we should all be in—rushing this way and that way, some running down on foot, others hindering one another, perhaps frightening the mules and letting them run away—and you must remember our lives almost depended on these mules; we could not get either up or down the mountain without them; and then you must remember, too, that Owen, after the fright he had, was not fit for much. If it had been any other wild animal, of course he would have told us at once; but as it was a serpent, he feared we should be paralyzed, and if not that, get dispersed and fall over the precipice, besides, he hoped at first that it was asleep, and dreaded lest any noise should waken it. As for me, my behavior when he was obliged to show it to me makes me think it should not have escaped. I shall always think that Talbot saved my life, for the serpent was beginning to uncoil himself."

"There can be very little doubt that he did," said I, "and most probably he was asleep when Talbot first saw him, and might have been awoke by the noise you made in quarrelling together."

"We were told afterwards, that those ash-colored serpents are believed always to live in pairs," proceeded my brother, "for when one is killed, another is almost sure to be seen about the same spot."

"I hope after this second escape you did not think of Haman," I observed. "No, I didn't," said my brother, with a much more thoughtful face than was common with him.

"When you think of the fear and hatred with which you regarded the serpent," I continued, "you should consider that this enmity was implanted because our first parents were tempted to sin, by Satan, under the form of a serpent; and that it is sin which we ought to fear and dread, far more than the serpent, which can inflict no injury, excepting to the body. You should be grateful, too, that the promise given so long ago has been fulfilled by our Redeemer—the promise that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.'"

"Yes," said my brother; "that was what the ship's chaplain said to us when we came on board."

And so ended my brother's story.

My brave boy, or, brave fellow.

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PROPOSALS. PROPOSALS FOR STAMPED ENVELOPES AND WRAPPERS. POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, 1 JANUARY 10, 1870. Sealed Proposals will be received until 3 P. M. on the 1st day of MARCH, 1870, for furnishing all the Stamped Envelopes and Newspaper Wrappers which this Department may require during a period of four years, commencing 1st of July, 1870, viz:— STAMPED ENVELOPES. No. 1. Note size, 2 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches, of white paper. No. 2. Ordinary letter size, 3 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches, of white, buff, canary, or cream-colored paper, or in such proportion of either as may be required. No. 3. Full letter size (ungummed on flap, for circulars), 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches, of the same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 4. Extra letter size (ungummed on flap, for circulars), 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches, of the same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 5. Extra letter size, 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 6. Official size, 3 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 7. Official size, 3 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 8. Extra official size, 4 1/2 by 9 1/2 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. NEWSPAPER WRAPPERS. The above envelopes and wrappers to be embossed with postage stamps of such denominations, styles, and colors, and to bear such printing on the face, and to be made in the most thorough manner, of paper of approved quality, and manufactured by the process of water-proofing, with such water marks or other devices to prevent imitation as the Postmaster-General may direct. The envelopes to be thoroughly and perfectly gummed, the gumming on the flap of each (except for circulars) to be put on not less than half an inch in width, the gum to be of the best quality, and to be gummed not less than three-fourths of an inch in width across the end. All envelopes and wrappers must be banded in parcels of twenty-five, and packed in strong pasteboard or straw boxes, each to contain not less than two hundred and fifty of the letter or extra letter size, and not more than one hundred of the official or extra official size, separately. The newspaper wrappers to be packed in boxes to contain not less than two hundred and fifty of each of the boxes are to be wrapped and sealed, or securely fastened in strong manilla paper, so as to safely bear transportation by mail, for delivery to postmasters. When two thousand or more envelopes are required to fill the order of a postmaster, the straw or pasteboard boxes containing the same must be packed in strong wooden cases, well strapped with hoop-iron, and addressed; but when less than two thousand are required, proper labels directed to the postmaster by an agent of the Department, must be placed upon each package by the contractor. Wooden cases, containing envelopes or wrappers to be transported by water routes, must be water-proofed, and water-proofing. The whole to be done under the inspection and direction of an agent of the Department.

The envelopes and wrappers must be furnished and delivered with all reasonable despatch, complete in all respects, ready for use, and in such quantities as may be required by the daily orders of postmasters; the deliveries to be made either at the Post Office Department, Washington, D. C., or at the office of an agent designated by the Department to receive the same; the place of delivery to be at the option of the Postmaster-General, and the cost of delivering as well as all expense of packing, addressing, labeling, and water-proofing, to be paid by the contractor. Bidders are notified that the Department will require, as a condition of the contract, that the envelopes and wrappers shall be manufactured and stored in such manner as to ensure security against loss by fire or theft. The manufacturer must at all times be subject to the inspection of an agent of the Department, who will require the stipulations of the contract to be faithfully observed. The dies for embossing the postage stamps on the envelopes and wrappers are to be executed to the satisfaction of the Postmaster-General, in the best style, and they are to be provided, renewed, and kept in order at the expense of the contractor. The department reserves the right of requiring new dies for any stamp, or denominations of stamps not now used, and alterations of dies or colors shall be made without extra charge. Specimens of the stamped envelopes and wrappers now in use are on file in the Department of Post Offices, but these specimens are not to be regarded as the style and quality fixed by the department as a standard for the new contract; bidders are therefore invited to submit samples of the different qualities and styles, including the paper proposed as well as the manufactured envelopes, wrappers, and boxes, and make their bids accordingly.

The contract will be awarded to the bidder whose proposal, although it be not the lowest, is considered most advantageous to the Government, taking into account the price, quality of the samples, workmanship, and the sufficiency and durability of the material to manufacture the envelopes and wrappers in accordance with the terms of this advertisement; and no proposal will be considered unless accompanied by a sufficient and satisfactory guarantee. The Postmaster-General also reserves the right to reject any and all bids, in his judgment the interests of the Government require it. Before closing a contract the successful bidder may be required to prepare new dies, and submit to the Postmaster-General a contract, in duplicate, for the use of the Government, and to pay the sum of \$200,000, and payments under said contract will be made quarterly, after proper adjustment of accounts.

The Postmaster-General reserves to himself the right to annul the contract whenever the same, or any part thereof, is offered for sale for the purpose of speculation; and under no circumstances will a transfer of the contract be allowed or sanctioned to any party who shall be in the possession of the contract, unless he is able to fulfill the conditions thereof than the original contractor. The right is also reserved to annul the contract for a failure to perform faithfully any of its stipulations. The number of envelopes of different sizes, and of wrappers issued to Postmasters during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1869, was as follows, viz:— No. 1. Note size—1,114,000. No. 2. Ordinary letter size; (not heretofore used)—4,150,000. No. 3. Full letter size—67,867,606. No. 4. Extra letter size, (ungummed, for circulars)—240,000. No. 5. Extra letter size—4,904,500. No. 6. Official size—1,000,000. No. 7. Official size—1,700,000. No. 8. Extra official size—2,595,950.

Bids should be securely enveloped and sealed, marked "Proposals for Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers," and addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, Post Office Department, Washington, D. C. JOHN A. J. CRESWELL, Postmaster General.

OFFICE OF THE SOUTH STREET BRIDGE COMMISSIONER, No. 224 S. FIFTH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 10, 1870. Sealed Proposals for erecting a bridge over the river Schuylkill at South street will be received at the office of the Commissioner, in the Department of Bridges, No. 224 S. FIFTH STREET, until 12 o'clock M. of the FIRST DAY OF MARCH, 1870. For the construction of a wrought-iron draw-bridge, with Murphy's rollers and stone abutments, with approach ramps, as described in the specification. The entire length of structure to be 219 feet, the truss span to be 165 feet each, with pivot draw, giving an opening of 77 feet on each side. The proposed bridge to be a girder bridge, to be accompanied by a bond with two approved sureties to an amount of \$50,000. Fifteen per cent to be retained on the work proceeds, the same to be included in the \$50,000 noted in bond, shall amount to fifteen per cent of the contract price, after which the contract moneys will be paid in full. Plans may be seen and specifications obtained at the office of the Commissioner, on and after the 24th instant. MOSES A. DROPSIE, President of the Commission.

MERRICK & SONS SOUTHWARK FOUNDRY, No. 426 WASHINGTON AVENUE, Philadelphia. WILLIAM WRIGHT'S PATENT VARIABLE CUT-OFF STEAM ENGINE, Regulated by the Governor. MERRICK'S SAFETY HOISTING MACHINE, Patented June, 1868. DAVID JOY'S PATENT VALVELESS STEAM HAMMER. B. M. WESTON'S PATENT SELF-CENTRING, SELF-BALANCING CENTRIFUGAL SUGAR-DRAINING MACHINE, AND HYDRO EXTRACTOR. For Cotton or Woolen Manufacture. 710 BROAD STREET, PHILADELPHIA. JOHN B. COPE.

PROPOSALS. OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR THE ERECTION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS. PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 17, 1870. SEALED PROPOSALS will be received for the following work and materials required in the execution of the WALKNIT Street portion of the PUBLIC BUILDINGS, to wit:— For all the excavations, including the trenches for the foundations. The price to be stated per cubic yard, which is to cover all digging, hauling away the surplus earth, and cutting down and removing whatever trees may come in the way of the excavations, without extra measurement or allowance. For taking down the terrace wall, cleaning the bricks, and piling them up adjacent to the buildings, taking down the iron railings, the gate posts, the coping of the wall and the steps, and depositing them on the grounds, and removing all the rubbish occasioned by the same. The price for this portion of the work to be stated in gross. For concreting the entire foundation of the buildings with small broken stone, and cement mortar, and grout, in conformity with the specifications. The depth of the concrete to be three feet, and the lateral dimensions to conform to the plans. The price to be stated per cubic foot, and to include all materials and labor. For furnishing and delivering large-size building stone, the price to be stated per perch of 24 cubic feet, measured in the walls. Also, for select building stone, averaging 2 by 5 feet, and from 12 to 15 inches thick; the price for the same to be stated per cubic foot, delivered on the ground. For building all the cellar walls, and the outside walls of the basement story, as high as the level line of the pavement, according to the plans and specifications. The price to be stated per perch of 24 cubic feet, laid in the walls, without extra measurement, and to include all labor and all materials except stone. The contract or contracts will be awarded to the best and the lowest bidder or bidders, who will be required to give approved security for the faithful performance of the same. The plans and specifications may be seen at the office of the Architect, Mr. JOHN McARTHUR, Jr., No. 306 S. SIXTH STREET. The proposals to be sealed and endorsed "Proposals for Public Buildings," and addressed to JAMES V. WATSON, Chairman of the Committee on Contracts, and to be left at the office of the Commissioners of Public Buildings, in the New Court House, SIXTH STREET, below Chesnut, on the 14th day of February next ensuing, between the hours of 11 and 12 o'clock A. M., at which time the bids will be opened, in the presence of such bidders as may wish to attend. By order of the Committee on Contracts, 119 Wm 111 H. C. PUGH, Secretary.

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